



Arizona DECA State Conference

Remarks by Gov. Jan Brewer

Monday, March 1, 2010

Good afternoon!

I am delighted to be here and honored to be a part of this 48th Annual State Conference. I wanted to speak to you today, not just to congratulate you for your achievements – which deserve high praise -- but also to congratulate you -- for your achievements that are yet to come.

Yes, I'm talking about the future – the future of Arizona – the future you will live in, and leave to your children.

And all of that depends on what we do in Arizona today.

I know that most of you will be heading off to college or pursuing other academic achievements.

So, let me tell you a story about Henry Kissinger – when he was Secretary of State.

He asked a young man on his staff to prepare a report about China.

The young man, wanting to impress his boss, worked very hard, and did a lot of research, and finally gave to Mr. Kissinger the long, detailed report that had been requested.

A few days after handing in the report, the young man was summoned to Kissinger's office where the Secretary of State told him that the report needed to be improved.

The young aide said, "Yes sir," and took back the report, and went to work again.

Again he submitted the report, and again, a few days later, Mr. Kissinger asked him to rework it.

When he was called into Kissinger's office for the fourth time, and asked to redo it again, the exhausted aide said in frustration, "But Mr. Secretary, there is nothing more I can do to this report. It is the best I can do."

"Well then," said Henry Kissinger, "If this is your very best effort, I suppose now is the time that I should read it."

The Secretary of State had not read the earlier reports from the young man, because he did not want to waste his time on mediocre work.

He set a single standard of excellence for himself, and taught his young assistant the valuable lesson that the only job worth doing is a good job -- your very best -- the first time.

Let me tell you what I've learned throughout my entire 28-year career as State Legislator; a State Senator; a Maricopa County Supervisor; your Secretary of State and now as your Governor.

I've learned one thing above all else: Doing the RIGHT thing almost always means doing the HARD thing.

However, I have been a consistent truth-teller, so I know what it takes to tell the hard truth -- even when it exacts a political cost.

When I inherited this office over one year ago, our State was on the brink of fiscal collapse.

Government was growing too large.

We were faced with a state budget deficit of nearly five billion dollars across two fiscal years, and we were not helped by a federal government whose unfunded mandates and sweetheart deals were stealing Arizona's freedom and threatening to bankrupt our state.

So, let me tell you what we have done so far.

We have made government more efficient, reducing spending by over one billion dollars.

We have streamlined agencies, shrinking the State work force by over ten percent.

We are now transferring back to the Federal Government all non-violent criminal aliens currently housed in the Arizona Department of Corrections.

We will transfer custody of between 300 and 400 inmates this fiscal year and between 600 to 800 inmates in the next fiscal year.

My administration has attracted well over one billion dollars in capital -- and nearly two thousand jobs -- by working closely with the Arizona Department of Commerce.

But, going forward, we must make further, substantial reductions in spending. The economy has still not recovered, our revenues are still depressed and there is no avoiding this hardship.

More state jobs are going to be shed and services are going to be further curtailed, or lost.

Let me be clear, in the history of this state no other Governor has cut state government more than I have.

As I have stated for over a year, the depth of the problem is so severe that we cannot solve it through cuts alone.

The damage done to education, and public safety would be far too great.

So, in the short run -- we must raise some additional revenue.

Just as with the reductions in spending, the longer we put this off, the less effective it will be in stabilizing our financial position.

I fought for -- and won, thanks to the help of courageous members of both parties in the State Senate and the State House -- the right of the VOTERS to decide whether to raise the state sales tax by 1 percent over the next three years.

I've NEVER voted to raise taxes in my entire career.

Not once in 28 years in public service.

Raising taxes is just not in my DNA.

But, I will be a "YES" vote come Election Day.

I'm voting "YES" because it's the right thing to do, and I strongly encourage you to vote "YES" as well.

If we are to preserve the core functions of the Arizona we all love, then Proposition 100 MUST pass.

Prop 100 will keep funding for Arizona's K-12 education system at reasonable levels, keeping students learning and class sizes manageable.

It will go to our universities and community colleges to keep higher education affordable.

It will go to keep felons locked up and it will go to give Arizona's poorest families the help they desperately need.

Without the revenue that a "YES" vote will bring, these programs **MUST BE CUT BY MORE THAN ONE BILLION DOLLARS IMMEDIATELY!**

That's why Prop 100 is the **RIGHT** thing to do.

This is a **TEMPORARY** tax – it will start on June 1st of this year, and come to a dead stop at the end of the day on May 31, 2013.

It will get us through until revenues recover, so that education does not bear the brunt of the downturn.

Please understand, though, that this isn't a cure-all. In the past year, we've streamlined state government by more than one billion dollars -- with more reductions to come.

We have tax reforms and an aggressive pro-growth job creation program that are ramping up, but still we need Prop 100.

Now, I know that some of you might not yet be old enough to vote.

But you do have a stake in this Proposition, and you can have a role in it, too.

In the years ahead, the kind of job you have or will pursue will depend on the educational foundation you have today.

By making sure that your parents and friends who **CAN** vote, cast a yes vote on Proposition 100, you can help ensure Arizona remains a place that has planned for the future.

I did not create this situation -- but I intend to resolve it -- and continue telling the people the truth about it.

I've proven I'm a problem solver. And, with your help, we will get through this.

My father died when I was 11.

My mother raised two children, opened up a business of her own and never quit.

My mother met every challenge that came her way ...

I am my mother's daughter.

I will never quit on education.

I will never give up on our schools.

I will never give up on you.

After all, you are the promise of the future, the standard for tomorrow, and the blessing for today.

God bless you, God bless your teachers and families, and God bless Arizona.

Thank you.